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A PLAN FOR TEACHING THE NOVEL A TALE OF TWO CITIES
TO A GROUP OF COMPETENT HIGH SCHOOL JUNIORS

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Harold James Bruxvoort
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Harold James Bruxvoort

Approved by Committee

W. Paul Blakely
Chairman

William B. Brumsted

Earle L. Canfield
Dean of the Graduate Division

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

For many years instructors of the English language arts in the senior high school have required their students to read Charles Dickens' A Tale of Two Cities. This novel is an excellent illustration of Dickens' work as a literary artist, an idealist, and a humanitarian of the nineteenth century.

It was the purpose of this study to prepare a critical analysis of Charles Dickens' A Tale of Two Cities and to develop a plan for the teaching of this novel to a group of competent high school juniors.

The procedure was to make an intensive survey of the criticisms by recognized literary critics concerning the literary works of Charles Dickens, to develop a teaching plan for A Tale of Two Cities, and to compile a list of audio-visual materials which could be used in various parts of the study.

A careful study of A Tale of Two Cities in the curriculum of the senior high school is justified. The novel contains much color, dramatic intensity, and suspense. Thus it is appealing to many students in the senior high school. It is a profoundly thoughtful novel. Dickens presents the essential truths of human life. His simple, sincere portrayal of human nature is nowhere better exemplified than in A Tale of Two Cities. As students follow the characters in A Tale of

Two Cities, they will learn much about the causes of human behavior. They will recognize the choices that people make and how these choices determine the quality of their lives. They will see that love is a regenerating force, that vengeance warps and blights the lives of those who pursue it, and that all human beings have dignity and cannot be exploited with impunity. Therefore A Tale of Two Cities provides an excellent opportunity to stimulate the students' thoughts concerning human values. The artistry of the interweaving of plot, characters, setting, and themes makes A Tale of Two Cities a fine vehicle for teaching the structural form of the novel. A study of A Tale of Two Cities by the senior high school student helps him to relive one of the great periods of past history and to deepen his understanding of the French Revolutionary Era. In conclusion, a careful study of A Tale of Two Cities impresses upon the reader Dickens' ideals of social justice, unselfish love, and personal self-sacrifice.

The plan for teaching A Tale of Two Cities reveals the inter-relationship of the language arts (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) as applied to a unit of literature and focuses attention on the learning activities necessary to accomplish the objectives of this unit of nineteenth-century English literature.

CHAPTER II

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF A TALE OF TWO CITIES

A Tale of Two Cities is one of Charles Dickens' most important and artistically constructed comments on life. The broad scope of this novel takes in the two foremost countries of the eighteenth century in a most exciting period of world history. France was in the midst of a violent revolution against an irresponsible and gluttonous aristocracy; England was entering upon a peaceful revolution that was changing the country from one that was essentially agricultural to one that was primarily industrial. Both of these revolutions created serious problems which Dickens was interested in and wrote about. Bleak House, Hard Times, and Little Dorrit are three novels in which Dickens described the serious problems of his own century. In Bleak House Dickens satirized the evils of the English law courts; Hard Times is a bitter attack on the evils of industrialism in Victorian England; Little Dorrit criticizes the laissez-faire policy of the industrial system in Victorian England. Then, in 1859, Dickens wrote A Tale of Two Cities. Dickens' purpose is clear. In the preface of this novel he wrote, "It has been one of my hopes to add something to the popular and picturesque means of understanding that terrible time, though no one can hope to add anything to the philosophy of Mr. Carlyle's wonderful book."¹

¹C. Dickens, A Tale of Two Cities (New York: Washington Square Press, 1963), p. xxv.

The ideas for the plot of A Tale of Two Cities were not entirely original with Dickens, but the ideas for this novel had first occurred to him while he was portraying the character of Richard Wardour in The Frozen Deep, a play written by Wilkie Collins. The action of the play centered upon rivalry in love: one man at the end sacrifices himself to save the life of the other, who had won the girl. Both The Frozen Deep and A Tale of Two Cities have this central triangle-sacrifice idea. Thus Dickens took this idea and set it in the time and events of the French Revolution. Another idea for A Tale of Two Cities was derived from Bulwer-Lytton's novel Zanoni, written in 1845. Zanoni loved Viola, a beautiful singer. She was sentenced to die on the guillotine in Paris. Zanoni took her place in the condemned group and died bravely.¹ A third source that Dickens consulted for ideas in his plot was The French Revolution by Carlyle. Carlyle is Dickens' authority for the scenes in Paris before and after the Reign of Terror. Cockshut stated, "The influence of Carlyle was mixed. Without him, Dickens, who rather lacked historical imagination, might not have been stirred to write about the French Revolution at all."²

¹E. Davis, The Flint and the Flame--The Artistry of Charles Dickens (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1963), p. 240.

²A. Cockshut, The Imagination of Charles Dickens (London: Collins Press, 1961), p. 71.

There are three kinds of inspiration in the references that Dickens makes to Carlyle. The first is the direct borrowing of description and scene. In Dickens' description of the peasants' attack upon the Bastille, he used many of Carlyle's own words. Concerning the murder of Foulon, both Carlyle and Dickens used the words "Let them eat grass." In addition to the above, Dickens used Carlyle's descriptions of prison procedures, the guillotine, the court trials, and the tumbrils.

The second kind of inspiration is the indirect use of characters and events. The characters of Defarge and his wife, Madame Defarge, come indirectly from Carlyle. Carlyle wrote that the president of the Jacobin Society was named Lafarge. Carlyle also mentioned that there was a female mob leader named Demoiselle Theroigne. This person became Madame Defarge, who was even more ruthless than her husband. He also wrote that the Jacobin women were prominent at the guillotine and that they knitted while they were viewing the executions. Thus Dickens applied this fact to Madame Defarge's knitted record of victims. The letter of Dr. Manette that was found in the Bastille by Defarge was also taken indirectly by Dickens from The French Revolution. In his description of the fall of the Bastille, Carlyle reprinted a letter found in the paper archives of the old prison. The letter was dated October 7, 1752. Manette's account, based on this letter, became Dickens' device

for revealing the secret of Manette's imprisonment.

A third kind of inspiration that Dickens derived from Carlyle is the suggestions which Dickens transferred to different characters or combined into new forms for fictional purposes. The hated gabelle, France's salt tax, turns up as the name of Darnay's agent on his uncle's estate. Carlyle mentioned the importance of Thelusson's Bank; Dickens named it Tellson's Bank. Carlyle graphically described the savage butchery outside La Force Prison in 1792; Dickens described in detail the great grindstone located near Tellson's Bank in Paris when the mob came to sharpen its weapons that were dulled in the awful slaughter. Carlyle also mentioned that Louis XVI, who mismanaged the governmental treatment of all parties in the period before the Reign of Terror, occasionally escaped from the world of his troubles with the tools of a smith. Dickens incorporated this idea when he portrayed Dr. Manette as being interested in the shoemaker tools whenever he was seriously troubled. Thus, Dickens took what he wanted from Carlyle, changed and concentrated it, and dressed up the details of his story from the historical record.¹

A Tale of Two Cities is divided into three books. Book I is entitled "Recalled to Life"; "The Golden Thread" is the title of Book II.

¹Davis, op. cit., pp. 244-248.

Book III is entitled "The Track of the Storm." These three books are concerned with the ancient régime, the Reign of Terror, and the building of a new society. Mechanically considered, the novel is divided almost equally between England and France. G. Robert Stange wrote, "...of the forty-five chapters, two recount the parallelism of events in England and France, nineteen are set in England, and twenty-four in France."¹

Dickens followed the traditional plan of a novel's plot, namely, the chronological sequence of events as they unfold throughout the plot. Chapter I of Book I begins in 1775, when Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette were the rulers in France and George III and Charlotte were the rulers in England. The imprisonment of Doctor Manette is over, and Mr. Lorry is portrayed as traveling to Paris to meet Doctor Manette, who had been taken a prisoner in 1757 by the ruthless Evremonde brothers. Book II begins in 1780, and the events and action of the plot in Book III begin in the autumn of 1792.

Dickens carried the plot forward through direct narration. He did not place great emphasis in this novel upon use of dialogue. Johnson wrote:

¹G. R. Stange, "Dickens and the Fiery Past: A Tale of Two Cities Reconsidered," The English Journal, XLVI (October, 1957), 385.

With somber brilliance, from almost the opening pages, the dark background is established against which there is to burst forth the volcanic fury culminating in those processions of bloodshed. There are the gutters of Sainte Antoine running red from the shattered wine cask, and the red stains on the bare feet and wooden shoes, . . . the tall joker who scrawls upon the wall with the dark fluid the word BLOOD . . . the sunset striking over the top of the hill into the traveling carriage and steeping the figure of the Marquis St. Evremonde in crimson.¹

Dickens lets the story tell itself with no auctorial intervention. The events of the story are presented with great vividness and clarity. Thus dialogue has only a minor role in moving the plot forward to the climax and falling action of the novel. Yet the plot contains a weakness: Dickens made too much use of coincidence. Defarge is Manette's former servant; Madame Defarge is the younger sister of the violated peasant girl; Charles Darnay, Manette's son-in-law, is a scion of the wicked Evremonde family. Barsad is Miss Pross's brother, and Carton bears a close physical resemblance to Darnay. Thus, coincidence weakens the story and makes it seem to be an artificial plot.²

In portraying the characters of A Tale of Two Cities, Dickens was faced by the question as to how he could keep his characters

¹E. Johnson, Charles Dickens--His Tragedy and Triumph (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1952), II, p. 976.

²Ibid., p. 980.

essentially simple and yet distinctly individual. He found an answer or solution to this problem by emphasizing or even exaggerating some habit of speech, some gesture, or some trait, until that character is so deeply impressed upon the reader's mind as to be unforgettable. Three examples of this method of characterization are Jerry Cruncher, Madame Defarge, and Jacques Three. Jerry Cruncher is noted for his spiky, black, unkempt hair.¹ Madame Defarge is known for her knitting,² and Jacques Three is portrayed many times as one who has an agitated and restless hand.³

The characters fall into two categories: the side of the right--the humble, kindly, and generous; and the side of the wrong.⁴ Lucie, Mr. Lorry, Charles Darnay, and Miss Pross are examples of the first category. An example of the second category is Monsieur the Marquis, Darnay's uncle. He is the universal symbol of the Old Order, the French aristocracy.

Concerning Dickens' attitude toward his main characters, G. K. Chesterton wrote:

¹Dickens, op. cit., p. 15.

²Ibid., p. 137.

³Ibid., pp. 210-211.

⁴D. Cecil, Early Victorian Novelists: Essays in Revaluation (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1935), p. 57.

Nobody in the world was ever less optimistic than Dickens in his treatment of evil or the evil man. When I say optimistic in this matter, I mean optimism, in the modern sense, of an attempt to whitewash evil. Nobody ever made less attempt to whitewash evil than Dickens. Nobody black was ever less white than Dickens' black. He painted his villains and lost characters more black than they really are. He crowds his stories with a kind of villain rare in modern fiction--the villain really without any "redeeming point."¹

Criticism has been directed toward Dickens concerning his portrayal of wicked characters in A Tale of Two Cities, especially his characterization of the Evrémonde brothers. Stephen wrote the following criticism:

It is a shameful thing for a popular writer to exaggerate the faults of the French aristocracy in a book which will naturally find its way to readers who know very little of the subject except what he chooses to tell them; but it is impossible not to feel that the melodramatic story which Mr. Dickens tells about the wicked Marquis who violates one of his serfs and murders another, is a grossly unfair representation of the state of society in France in the middle of the eighteenth century. That the French noblesse had much to answer for, in a thousand ways, is a lamentable truth; but it is by no means true that they could rob, murder, and ravish with impunity.²

However, selections from historical works have shown that the lord of a castle had the privilege to take temporarily any woman in his domain from her family or husband. The man who refused to give up his newly

¹G. K. Chesterton, Charles Dickens--A Critical Study (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1906), p. 284.

²J. F. Stephen, "A Tale of Two Cities," The Dickens Critics, G. H. Ford and L. Lane, Jr., editors (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1961), p. 45.

wed wife was often roughly treated or killed.¹ Therefore Dickens decided to use this spectacular example of evil aristocratic privilege in A Tale of Two Cities. Davis supported Dickens in his portrayal of the Evrémonde brothers. Quoting a statement made by Dickens, Davis wrote:

I [Dickens] had of course full knowledge of the formal surrender of the feudal privileges, but these had been bitterly felt quite near to the time of the Revolution as the Doctor's narrative, which you will remember, dates long before the Terror. With the slang of the new philosophy on the one side, it was not unreasonable or unallowable on the other, to suppose a nobleman wedded to the old cruel ideas, and representing the time going out as his nephew represents the time coming in. If there be anything certain on earth, I take it that the condition of the French peasant generally at that day was intolerable.²

None of the characters such as Dr. Manette, Charles Darnay, Sydney Carton, or Lucie Manette was conceived as a literal rendition of anyone that Dickens knew in real life. Lucie, for example, is given hardly any individualized traits at all. Johnson made the following comment:

What the persons in the book do reflect as a group and in their several relations to the main situations of the story are the various individual aspects of Dickens' emotional dilemmas: his longing for an ideal love that might flower in a domestic warmth of tenderness and understanding, his haunting fear that he might never find it, his anguished sense of the grandeur

¹Davis, op. cit., p. 243.

²Ibid.

of renunciation, his personal rebellion against the imprisoning codes of a society that deprived him of his desire rising into impersonal rebellion against all the frustrations and miseries that society inflicted upon mankind.¹

Dickens identified himself the most closely to Sydney Carton.

What was the basic reason for this? Various writers have offered their opinions on this matter. Hesketh Pearson stated that this aspect of his work

was the direct outcome of Dickens's emotional life at a time when he had fallen in love, believed himself to be shamefully used and wrongfully abused by people who owed everything to him...As a defense against this seemingly hostile outer world, and to comfort his conscience, he [Dickens] dramatized himself both in fact and in fiction, [and] saw himself as a much-wronged deeply-suffering but heroic soul.²

Johnson believed that these comments made by Pearson are not entirely just to Charles Dickens. He [Johnson] wrote:

If Carton is a suffering but heroic soul, he is also one who feels within himself a deep sense of having done wrong, of remorse and guilt, and of the need of atoning for his errors. In such a view of oneself, there is none of the sentimentality and deception of dramatizing oneself as an innocent victim. Carton's renunciation is a deed of purification and redemption that is at once the consummation of a deeper justice amid the excesses of vengeance called revolutionary justice and a triumphant assertion of the saving and creating power of love.³

Dickens' characters in A Tale of Two Cities should not be

¹Johnson, op. cit., p. 973.

²Ibid., p. 981.

³Ibid.

classified as stereotypes. None of them are types; no two are the same. Cecil wrote, "Dickens' characters derive their life from the fact that they do reveal, to an extraordinary degree, a certain aspect of real human nature--its individuality."¹

Darnay is the accredited representative of Dickens in the novel. He is the "normal" hero for whom a happy ending is still possible. However, he is a somewhat "flat" character. He does not undergo a mental or spiritual change in the novel. It is the opinion of Gross that Dickens could have developed him more fully by reason of his position as an exile, his struggles as a teacher of the French language in London, and his admiration for George Washington.²

Carton is, of course, a far more striking character. He has squandered his talents and gifts, and he has drunk away his early promise. His will is broken, but his intellect remains unimpaired. He said to Lucie, "I shall never be better than I am. I shall sink lower and be worse...I am like one who died young. All my life might have been."³ Yet he has a certain vitality as it is revealed in Book III. He is shown in the closing chapters of the novel as a man

¹Cecil, op. cit., p. 38.

²J. Gross, "A Tale of Two Cities," (in) Dickens and the Twentieth Century, G. Pearson and J. Gross, editors (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962), p. 189.

³Dickens, op. cit., p. 186.

courting death and embracing it when it comes. Gross stated that Carton belonged to a line of "cultivated wastrels who play an increasingly large part in Dickens' novels during the second half of his career, culminating in the luckless Richard Carstone of Bleak House."¹

In establishing a setting for A Tale of Two Cities, Dickens used the technique of contrasts in Chapter I of Book I. He wrote:

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair...²

The political and social conditions of England and France in 1775 are presented and contrasted with each other. The conditions and state of affairs portrayed by Dickens emphasize to the reader that troublesome days lie ahead for the citizens of England and France: a sense of foreboding, suspicion, lawlessness, and rebellion against authority is in the air. Already in Chapter I, Dickens hinted that trees would be cut down in France by the Woodman, Fate, to be fashioned for a guillotine. The Farmer, Death, had already set aside rude carts to be the tumbrils of the Revolution. In Chapter V of Book I, Dickens focused attention upon the slums of St. Antoine. From this section of Paris

¹Gross, op. cit., pp. 189-190.

²Dickens, op. cit., p. 3.

would come the manpower and arms necessary for the coming Revolution. The intolerable living conditions and the poverty-stricken people are portrayed in gruesome detail. A woman is portrayed as trying to soften the pain in her starved fingers. The men have matted locks and cadaverous faces. They are "samples of a people that had undergone a terrible grinding and regrinding in the mill...The mill that grinds young people old; the children had ancient faces and grave voices; and upon them...was the sign, Hunger."¹ In this way Dickens provided the mood and atmosphere for the events to follow in A Tale of Two Cities.

Dickens is a master in style and literary technique. A Tale of Two Cities is filled with metaphors, similes, contrasts, and vivid descriptions. Chesterton stated, "In dignity and eloquence, it [A Tale of Two Cities] stands almost alone among the books by Dickens."²

Concerning Dickens' artistry, Cecil wrote:

Creative imagination may not be the only quality necessary to the novelist, but it is the first quality. And no English novelist had it quite the way Dickens had. Scott's imagination and Emily Bronte's were of a finer quality...but they none of them had an imagination at once so forceful, so varied and so self-dependent as Dickens...he sweeps us away...by sheer dramatic intensity.³

¹Ibid., pp. 37-38.

²Chesterton, op. cit., p. 233.

³Cecil, op. cit., p. 54.

Gross stated the following about Dickens' style:

Dickens' genius inheres in minute particulars; later we may discern patterns of symbolism and imagery, ...but first we are struck by the lavish heaping up of acute observations, startling similes, and descriptive flourishes.¹

Dickens used Biblical allusions throughout A Tale of Two Cities. He wrote, "In both countries it was clearer than crystal to the lords of the State preserves of loaves and fishes, that things in general were settled forever."² When Lucie's son was critically ill, he [the son] said, "I am called, and I must go!" "Suffer them and forbid them no. They see my Father's face."³ The seamstress said to Carton on the way to the guillotine, "...I have been able to raise my thoughts to Him who was put to death, that we might have hope and comfort here today."⁴ When Carton stepped calmly up to the guillotine, he quoted John 11:25-26: "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die."

Many contrasts are made between characters in A Tale of Two Cities: Madame Defarge with Miss Pross, Sidney Carton with Charles

¹Gross, op. cit., p. 194.

²Dickens, op. cit., p. 3.

³Ibid., p. 261.

⁴Ibid., p. 467.

Darnay, Mr. Lorry with Doctor Manette, and Jerry Cruncher with Jerry, his son.

Another evidence of Dickens' creative imagination and literary skill is his talent in forming similes. In Chapter V of Book I, the wine cask "shattered like a walnut-shell."¹ The peasants' faces are compared to a "bowl of battered small coins."² Monsieur the Marquis had a face "like a fine mask."³ The peasants are pictured as "a forest of naked arms like shrivelled branches of trees in a winter wind."⁴ Gaspard is described as being "as tall as a spectre."⁵

Cockshut stated, "He [Dickens] enjoyed over-obvious comparisons, like the wine running through the gutters and foreshadowing the blood bath of the Revolution...."⁶

Dickens formed many metaphors in A Tale of Two Cities. Mr. Stryver is a "shrewd lion"; Carton is a "jackal."⁷ Those who were

¹Ibid., p. 33.

²Ibid., p. 204.

³Ibid., p. 134.

⁴Ibid., p. 266.

⁵Ibid., p. 207.

⁶Cockshut, op. cit., p. 185.

⁷Dickens, op. cit., p. 107.

sentenced to die on the guillotine are referred to as wine. Dickens wrote, "Six tumbrils carry the day's wine to La Guillotine."¹ When Gaspard's child was run over by the Marquis' carriage, Dickens wrote, "The rats had crept out of their holes to look on."² The guillotine is "the National Razor."³ The people are a "mass of scarecrows."⁴ The mob is "a living sea."⁵ The crowd in the courtroom are "blue flies."⁶

Many objects are personified by Dickens. Fate is a "Woodman"; Death is a "Farmer."⁷ The slum of Saint Antoine is personified when Dickens wrote, "...a tremendous roar arose from the throat of Saint Antoine."⁸ He also wrote that Defarge returned to "the bosom of Saint Antoine."⁹ Hunger is also personified when Dickens wrote that "Hunger rattled its dry bones...."¹⁰

¹Ibid., p. 463.

²Ibid., p. 138.

³Ibid., p. 342.

⁴Ibid., p. 266.

⁵Ibid., p. 267.

⁶Ibid., p. 87.

⁷Ibid., p. 4.

⁸Ibid., p. 266.

⁹Ibid., p. 218.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 36.

The following section of a paragraph describing the attack on the Bastille by the mob contains several good examples of onomatopoeia:

...Flashing weapons, blazing torches, smoking waggonloads of wet straw, hard work at neighboring barricades in all directions, shrieks, volleys, execrations, bravery without stint, boom, smash and rattle...but, still the deep ditch, and the single draw-bridge, and the massive stone walls...¹

Another literary technique of Dickens is his appropriate choice of chapter titles. Several chapter titles give a clue to the action, events, or subjects covered in that chapter. The chapter entitled "The Wine Shop" introduces the reader to the slums of Saint Antoine, the Defarges, and the fact that the wine shop is the headquarters of the Jacques. "The Honest Tradesman" refers to the notorious activities of Jerry Cruncher as a "Resurrection Man." The chapter entitled "The Jackal" introduces the reader to the talents and work activities of Sydney Carton as an assistant to Mr. Stryver. The title is appropriate because a jackal is a person who does the drudgery work for another. In "A Hand at Cards" Dickens hinted that Carton and Barsad would make an agreement concerning the future plans of Carton to insure the future happiness of Lucie and Charles Darnay. He used the extended metaphor of a game of cards between Carton and Barsad to emphasize the "gambling" aspects of the conversation between the two men.

¹Ibid., p. 268.

Dickens seemed to be fascinated with the concept of ghosts and phantoms in A Tale of Two Cities. There are many references to spectres, phantoms, and apparitions. When Lucie prepares to meet her father in Book I, she is afraid that she is going to meet his ghost. This fear is almost justified when she sees his spectral face and hears his faint voice; the mist moving up the Dover Road is portrayed "like an evil spirit seeking rest and finding none."¹ The penniless emigrés haunt Tellson's Bank like familiar spirits.² When Miss Pross shoots Madame Defarge, Dickens wrote, "As the smoke cleared...it passed out on the air, like the soul of the furious woman whose body lay lifeless on the ground."³ The fountains of the chateau are ghostly in the dawn.⁴ What does this emphasis upon ghostliness suggest? What are its deeper implications? Gross stated:

Such ghostliness suggests...a sense of unreality, of the death in life to which men are reduced by imprisonment, psychological or actual. To Darnay, the prisoners at La Force...are ghosts all...Ghosts are also the creatures of false or...imperfect resurrection: the grave gives up its dead reluctantly, and the prisoner who has been released is still far from being a free man. The inmates of the Bastille, suddenly given their liberty, ...are anything but overjoyed...Even...Darnay, after his Old Bailey acquittal, "scarcely seems to belong to this world again". As for the Doctor Manette, he has been as deeply scarred by his

¹Ibid., p. 7.

²Ibid., p. 291.

³Ibid., p. 461.

⁴Ibid., p. 157.

prison experience as William Dorrit.¹

The concepts and images of the prison are dealt with in several of Dickens' works. The prison image dominates in Little Dorrit, Pickwick Papers, Oliver Twist, and A Tale of Two Cities. Oliver Twist, for example, begins with the workhouse imprisonment of Oliver and ends with Fagin's condemned cell. A Tale of Two Cities begins with a royalist prison and ends with a revolutionary one. The reader is always seeing the prison from the inside. The image of the prison is always waiting to well up into the minds of Dickens' characters. Cockshut made the following statement concerning the prison concept:

From one point of view Dickens' prolonged attack upon the subject [prison] may be seen as a struggle to find value, even usefulness, in the prison experience...he tried to think of the suffering and confinement of prisoners as positively beneficial in their future lives. This concept seems for a time to govern the plot of A Tale of Two Cities. Manette's imprisonment apparently gives him the right, under a new revolutionary regime, to prevent the persecution of those he loves.²

Gross made this statement concerning the prison image: "The prison and the grave are linked in Dickens' mind with the idea that 'every human creature is constituted to be that profound secret and mystery to every other'. We live in essential isolation..."³ On his journey

¹Gross, op. cit., p. 188.

²Cockshut, op. cit., p. 48.

³Gross, op. cit., p. 188.

to greet the newly released Manette, Mr. Lorry feels as if he is going to unearth a secret as well as dig up a dead man. He is in a world where everyone is a secret man, a world of whispers, dreams, and echoes.

Another noted characteristic of A Tale of Two Cities is its impressive crowd and mob scenes. The Paris mob is, from the start, an irresistible social force. Its members have no personal hopes and fears; their individuality is swallowed up by the mass. Dickens described the French mob as "an ocean," "a raging flood," and "a whirlpool of boiling waters." These are strongly worded metaphors. These are images of death. Gross wrote:

Dickens is unyielding in his hostility to the crowd. The buzzing of the flies on the scent for carrion at the Old Bailey trial and the mass-rejoicing at Roger Cly's funeral are early indications of what he feels. The courtroom in Paris is also full of buzzing and stirring, but by this time the atmosphere has become positively cannibalistic...Madame Defarge "feasts" on the prisoner; Jacques Three...is described as an "epicure."¹

Concerning Dickens' hostility to the mob, House commented:

Dickens has obvious hatred for the...uncontrollable fury of the mob...The concentration of emotion is never on Charles Darnay; it is all on the wild frenzy of people who have committed everything to violence...he attributes every kind of monstrous wickedness to its leaders.²

¹Ibid., p. 193.

²H. House, The Dickens World (London: Oxford University Press, 1942), p. 214.

Why did Dickens place so much emphasis upon the mob scenes? The image of a ruthless and triumphant mob was one of the key worries of the Victorian educated class. They were inclined to take revolutions at their face value as spontaneous eruptions of popular feeling. They were haunted by the memory of the mob that stormed the Bastille. The mob was, therefore, a public obsession of his time, but it also appealed to him as an artist. In the chapter entitled "Triumph" in Book III, Dickens examined the professional justice of the English courts and popular justice which is based on the instincts of the mob.

In A Tale of Two Cities Dickens often criticized customs, individuals, or institutions. In Chapter I of Book I, Dickens criticized the political and social conditions in England and France. He criticized the harsh punishment that was given to a French youth who failed to kneel down to a procession of monks which passed him at a distance of one hundred and fifty feet. He also condemned the severe punishment given to those who committed minor crimes in England. In Chapter VII of Book II, he criticized the officials of the French government, military and naval officers, and members of the clergy. He charged that they were completely unqualified for their positions of responsibility in the government and the Church. Above all, he criticized and satirized the French aristocrats who assumed no moral responsibility for the welfare of the common people living on the estates

of the nobility. Cecil stated that Dickens had a deep belief in the "paramount value of the primary, simple, benevolent impulses of man... Class distinctions and the aristocratic system were especially hateful to him because they checked the natural...current of benevolence which should flow from one man to another."¹ This is Dickens' philosophy, and A Tale of Two Cities is an excellent illustration of it. Natural human kindness is pitted against the soulless cruelty of an impersonal institution, an inhuman theory, and individual selfishness. He believed that the novel is an effective instrument of social regeneration. He also believed that "evil conditions should be reproduced with no mitigation of their gruesome detail. His Victorian conscience refused to tolerate the cruder excesses of criminality and blasphemy that his situations demanded."² Therefore, Dickens was realistic in his descriptions of the plight of the common people in Saint Antoine and in the small country villages prior to the Revolution. These realistic descriptions with their masses of minute detail make the resulting attack upon the Bastille, that symbol of tyranny and oppression, an inevitable occurrence.

¹Cecil, op. cit., p. 56.

²P. Edgar, The Art of the Novel from 1700 to the Present Time (New York: Macmillan Company, 1933), p. 123.

The development of the plot is generally expert. In Book II Dickens alternated action between England and France, managing to balance the events which introduce the Defarges and the scene in which Monseigneur is assassinated after he has run over a child with the story of Lucie and Dr. Manette in London, and then building up to Lucie's marriage with Darnay. Dickens also carefully contrasted the two trials for Darnay's life. The first shows him acquitted on the false charge of spying that was brought by Barsad and Cly. The second trial, in Book III, gives Carton another opportunity for saving Darnay, but only after sentence is passed on him.

The climax is prepared for and built up in a very concise fashion. The last three chapters are chronologically adjusted for this effect. In Chapter XIII of Book III, Carton substitutes himself for Darnay, and the drugged man is hurried from the city by Mr. Lorry, Lucie, and Dr. Manette. Enough is told to assure the reader that they escape, and then they are lost to the narrative. Chapter XIV relates the death of Madame Defarge at the hands of Miss Pross and then goes on to show that she and Jerry Cruncher escape also. In Chapter XV Carton goes to the guillotine, and that is the end. In other novels Dickens has sometimes added chapters and incidents to take care of the future of almost every character in the story. However, in A Tale of Two Cities, Carton dies, and the story is finished except for Carton's imaginary thoughts at the scaffold.

The most obvious theme of A Tale of Two Cities is the theme of revolution. This is brought to the attention of the reader through the events of the plot. Johnson wrote that the theme of revolution was "born out of his [Dickens'] sense of intolerable oppression and his sympathy with sufferings generating an inevitable upheaval."¹ He viewed the Revolution as the relentless consequence of past actions. Concerning this theme of political revolution, House wrote, "The main impression it [A Tale of Two Cities] leaves on its readers is of the horror and bloodiness of the revolutionary atmosphere, and the grim idea of Vengeance epitomized in Madame Defarge."²

A Tale of Two Cities is concerned with the conflict between two forms of relationship: relation to society, and direct, intimate relation to other individuals.³ In order to create a second theme of "resurrection," (that is, descent into death and return from it to a life at last given a meaning), Dickens had to divide his hero into two persons: Charles Darnay and his "double," Carton. Carton must die in Darnay's place so that Darnay may live happily with Lucie. Miller

¹Johnson, op. cit., p. 974.

²House, loc. cit.

³J. H. Miller, Charles Dickens--The World of His Novels (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), p. 225.

stated in connection with this theme of resurrection:

Here, Little Dorrit's act of self-abnegation is seen to require, in order to be efficacious, the supreme sacrifice to life itself... Dickens succeeds...in seeing the act of self-sacrifice from the inside. He thereby investigates at a much deeper level the saving relation of love.¹

Dickens prepared for his use of the resurrection theme by entitling Book I "Recalled to Life." In this way, the novel opens with the feeblest of resurrections--the recall to life of Dr. Manette. Later, Dickens introduced the resurrection theme for a second time by having Carton remember, on the night before Darnay is sentenced, how he had followed his father to the grave, and the preacher had read, "I am the resurrection and the life..." Davis stated, "Carton's death is a form of spiritual resurrection at the same time that Darnay's release is to life from the sentence of death."²

A Tale of Two Cities can be classified as a historical romance. As a historical novel, it takes its setting in England and France from 1775 to 1793. Many of the historical events described in this novel have their origin in Carlyle's The French Revolution. Thus Dickens attempted to reproduce the life and events of a great era. As a romantic novelist, Dickens came near to endowing Sidney Carton with tragic

¹Ibid., p. 248.

²Davis, op. cit., p. 252.

interest, for this young man's sacrifice has impressed thousands of people with the nobility of self-sacrifice.¹ He also managed to catch the spirit of the French Revolution as manifested by the peasantry and the Parisian rabble.

In comparison with Dickens' other major novels, A Tale of Two Cities is sometimes referred to as uncharacteristic because it lacks almost entirely his usual gallery of comics. Only the peculiar traits of Miss Pross and the "Resurrection Man" activities of Jerry Cruncher give a sense of humor and comic relief to the story. Burton wrote that A Tale of Two Cities was sufficient proof "that the power of Dickens was not dependent exclusively upon the comic."² It also differs from Dickens' other novels in that more emphasis is placed upon the events in A Tale of Two Cities than upon the characters in the novel. Furthermore, the characters are portrayed more by their actions than by what they say throughout the novel.

According to Johnson, Dickens' purpose was

to portray the French Revolution as the inevitable fruit of seed that had been sowed over many long generations, as the harvest of the past, the working out of a historical necessity imbued with a certain dreadful and tragic social justice even when the innocent were among its victims.³

¹G. C. Knight, The Novel in English (New York: R. R. Smith, Inc., 1931), p. 177.

²R. Burton, Masters of the English Novel (New York: Holt and Company, 1909), p. 186.

³Johnson, op. cit., p. 981.

Gross stated, "Dickens is always reminding himself that the Revolution, though 'a frightful moral disorder,' was born of 'unspeakable suffering, intolerable oppression, and heartless indifference'."¹

Through his study of the French Revolution, Dickens formulated a theory of history which was incorporated into Book III of A Tale of Two Cities. Dickens wrote:

Crush humanity out of shape once more, under similar hammers, and it will twist itself into the same tortured forms. Sow the same seed of rapacious license and oppression over again, and it will surely yield the same fruit according to its kind.²

Dickens viewed the revolution with hatred and disgust. He did not record a single incident in which it might be shown as beneficent or constructive. Instead, the revolution is described in terms of pestilence and madness.³ Yet at the end of Chapter XV in Book III, Dickens gave a sense of new hope for the future. Carton stated:

I see a beautiful city, a brilliant people rising out of this abyss, and in their struggles to be truly free, in their triumphs and defeats, through many long years to come, I see the evil of this time and of the previous time of which this is the natural birth, gradually making expiation for itself and wearing out.⁴

¹Davis, op. cit., p. 253.

²Dickens, op. cit., p. 464.

³Gross, op. cit., p. 192.

⁴Dickens, op. cit., p. 469.

Dickens' thesis for A Tale of Two Cities is: "Revolution can happen in England too!" Concerning this thesis, Davis wrote the following comments:

The aristocrats in France were stupid and hard-hearted; they were responsible for spurring the people to revolt; England's ruling classes were also being stupid and hard-hearted. Dickens joins with Carlyle in showing the reasons for what had happened in France, although he does not try to bring in a panoramic view of historical characters like Mirabeau, Lafayette, Robespierre, or Napoleon...In the first part of the novel he sympathizes with the downtrodden people, but at the last these people are the villains. Extreme injustice leads to violence; see what happened in the days of the Terror. If British employers insist upon the selfish laissez-faire doctrine, workers will eventually rise to protect themselves. A catastrophe like the French Revolution could easily happen elsewhere.¹

Dickens' thesis for A Tale of Two Cities has an element of timelessness and universality. What was true in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is also true in the twentieth century. Social injustice, graft, irresponsibility, the refusal of man to recognize the individual rights of all men, economic injustice, and racial inequality cannot be tolerated at any time in a historical period. If these injustices are tolerated by those in positions of authority, revolution and strife will inevitably occur. Love and respect for all humanity must be much stronger than selfishness and hatred.

In the foregoing chapter an attempt was made by the writer to

¹Davis, op. cit., p. 253.

present a critical analysis of Dickens' A Tale of Two Cities. Attention was given by the writer to the style and literary techniques of Charles Dickens. Data were given by the writer in respect to the plot, characterization, structure, and themes of this novel. Reference was made to literary critics such as House, Chesterton, Gross, Johnson, Davis, and Burton.

CHAPTER III

A DETAILED TEACHING PLAN FOR

A TALE OF TWO CITIES

A Tale of Two Cities, as a historical romance, is one of the great literary classics of the nineteenth-century period of English literature. Generations of readers have, through Dickens' narrative mastery, heard ominous hoofbeats sounding through the mist, seen a forest of bloody weapons shaken by an angry mob, felt the heavy hand of brutal authority fall on an innocent shoulder. The action of the plot is exciting, but even more memorable are Dickens' sympathy with the oppressed, the reflections of warm human affections, and his climactic idealism of selflessness.

It was the purpose of the writer in this chapter to present a detailed teaching plan for A Tale of Two Cities to be used with a class of competent juniors in the senior high school. Materials presented by the writer include activities for reading, writing, speaking, and listening for students studying this classic of the nineteenth-century period.

The introduction of paperback books into the classroom has been of great assistance to teachers of the language arts. Several publishing companies have prepared economical paperback editions of A Tale of Two Cities. The writer recommends two editions for use in

the classroom. The first edition, published by the Macmillan Company, includes an excellent introduction that discusses Dickens' early life, his craftsmanship as a writer, and the structure of a novel.¹ The second edition recommended by the writer is published by the Washington Square Press. It includes an excellent introduction by Johnson and a helpful bibliography for the instructor and student.²

In order to create the necessary atmosphere, interest, and mood, the instructor could project onto a screen pictures from the September, 1955, edition of The National Geographic Magazine. L. R. Borah has an article entitled "Landmarks of Literary England." It contains familiar scenes from Dickens' works.³ An opaque projector is necessary for this activity. The instructor can also put a map of England and France on the bulletin board with arrows pointing to London, Paris, Beauvais, and Dover. The following questions could also be placed on the bulletin board:

1. Are the mistakes of parents ever paid for by their children?
2. Should the innocent be punished for the guilty?
3. What important choices must a person make in his life?

¹C. Dickens, A Tale of Two Cities (New York: Macmillan Company, 1961).

²C. Dickens, A Tale of Two Cities (New York: Washington Square Press, 1963).

³L. R. Borah, "Landmarks of Literary England," The National Geographic Magazine, CVIII (September, 1955), 295-350.

4. Can good ever come from evil?
5. How important is it to have revenge on someone who has wronged you?

The instructor should identify these questions as those which students will find themselves thinking about while they are reading A Tale of Two Cities.

Before the students begin to read A Tale of Two Cities, the instructor should present information concerning the historical background of the novel. An excellent filmstrip, "The Historical Background of A Tale of Two Cities," is available for this purpose.¹ Students also need adequate information on how to read a historical novel. The filmstrip, "How to Read a Historical Novel," has been produced for this purpose.² These filmstrips could be presented on the first day of class.

The instructor should also prepare an introductory biographical summary of the author, Charles Dickens. Point out that he was a social reformer and a spokesman for the oppressed. If the instructor wishes, he may present a filmstrip, "Charles Dickens--Novelist Who

¹"The Historical Background of A Tale of Two Cities," McGraw-Hill Book Company, Incorporated, Hightstown, New Jersey.

²"How to Read a Historical Novel," McGraw-Hill Book Company, Incorporated, Hightstown, New Jersey.

Effected Many Reforms," to the class.¹ The filmstrip gives a good background of Dickens which will enable the students to understand and appreciate the novels that he produced.

The instructor should explain that A Tale of Two Cities was separated into three parts by Dickens. Book I is entitled "Recalled to Life"; Book II is "The Golden Thread"; Book III is entitled "The Track of the Storm."

BOOK I

The first few paragraphs of Chapter I should be read in class. Define the term "paradox" and explain that the first paragraph of the novel is a paradox. Chapters I, II, and III should then be assigned for outside reading. After the students have read these chapters, they should discuss questions such as the following:

1. What is the historical background for the story as Dickens describes it in Chapter I? What objects are personified?
2. What is the meaning of the term "the divine rights" in Chapter I?
3. What message was brought to Mr. Lorry by Jerry Cruncher?
4. What disturbs Mr. Lorry in Chapter III? What bothers Jerry?

¹"Charles Dickens--Novelist Who Effected Many Reforms," Educational Audio Visual, Incorporated, Pleasantville, New York.

5. Is Chapter III mainly (a) action (b) dialogue (c) atmosphere (d) satire (e) thoughtful comment? Explain.

Perhaps the last section of Chapter III will need clarification for some students.

Assign Chapters IV, V, and VI for outside reading. Call the attention of the class to the descriptions of Mr. Lorry and Lucie Manette, Lucie's beliefs concerning her parents, the change in setting from England to France, the vivid description of Saint Antoine, the introduction of the Defarges into the story, and Dickens' portrayal of Dr. Manette. Be sure that the students understand the mental state of a person who has been in isolation for a long period of time. The following questions could be discussed in class:

1. Why and in what capacity has Mr. Lorry met Lucie?
2. In what manner does Mr. Lorry bring up the fact that Dr. Manette is alive?
3. What is the significance of the incident of the broken wine cask to the story? What prophetic statements are made?
4. Do you find any examples of sentimentalism in Chapter VI?
5. Discuss Dr. Manette's condition. How does Dickens make Dr. Manette's recognition of Lucie dramatic and appealing to the reader?

It is interesting for the class to read parts orally as a dramatic skit. This gives the story more of a feeling of reality. In Chapter V, read

the dialogue in the scene with Dr. Manette, Defarge, Mr. Lorry, and Miss Manette. As a concluding activity for Book I, select twelve students to serve on three panels. Assign the following topics to the panels:

1. Dickens' skill in building up suspense to dramatic crises in either (a) Mr. Lorry's journey and meeting Miss Manette or (b) Lucie's meeting with her father.
2. Dickens' use of details in appearance, speech, and actions to indicate the personalities of two contrasting characters; for example, Mr. Lorry and Monsieur Defarge, or the "red-haired woman" attending Lucie and Madame Defarge.
3. Dickens' use of details of physical environment in the story to reflect the emotions of the main characters, of a group of people, of an epoch in history. Show how Dickens relates (a) plot (b) mood of characters and (c) various aspects of weather and geography. For example, why is it particularly appropriate that the story begins at night?

As an alternate concluding activity for Book I, the class could write a composition on this topic: Describe our present national era and condition, striking a parallel in your description to the description Dickens provides of England and France in 1775.

In a summarization of Book I, point out the political and economic conditions of France, the mood established by Dickens, and the helplessness of Dr. Manette, and give a brief resume' of each character in Book I.

BOOK II

In introducing Chapter I of Book II, the instructor should stress the point that this chapter contains much satire. Instruct the students to point out passages of satirical comment. Chapters II and III should be part of the same assignment, for they are closely related to each other. The rising action of the plot begins in Chapter II. The barbaric English punishment of quartering for those convicted of treason should be explained. Point out that close attention should be paid to the new characters entering the story: Sydney Carton, Charles Darnay, Mr. Stryver, John Barsad, and Roger Cly. Students can then begin to read these three chapters. These questions can be discussed at the next meeting of the class:

1. Jerry Cruncher refers to himself as an "honest tradesman."

Dickens made a mystery about that "trade", but what clues were given to the reader by Dickens?

2. What personality traits are indicated by the details of

Darnay's personal appearance?

3. How had Lucie and Darnay first met?
4. Would a trial for treason be as popular an entertainment today as it was in the eighteenth century?
5. What very important item did Mr. Stryver point out to Court that saved Darnay's life?
6. What will the main conflict of this novel be?

In Chapter IV the students will be given a closer look at Sydney Carton. They will see the working relationship between Stryver and Carton in Chapter V. Explain what a jackal is and why this chapter is appropriately named. Chapter VI takes place four months after the trial of Darnay. Miss Pross, the "wild-looking woman," is portrayed more fully here. Students should be able to answer questions such as the following:

1. What do you learn concerning Sydney Carton, and what do you think of him?
2. In what way does Carton represent a jackal in Chapter V?
3. What future events are foreshadowed in Chapter VI?

At this point the students should select examples of metaphors, repetitions, and similes. These should be discussed in class and then given to the instructor at the end of the class period.

Assign Chapters VII, VIII, and IX of Book II. Explain that the Monseigneur is a title of respect referring to the King or the French

nobility. Explain also that the Farmer-General is the official tax collector who collected taxes from the peasants living on the estates of the nobility. In Chapter IX the term "letter de cachet" requires explanation. It was a letter that favored noblemen could procure from the King of France in order to send a man to prison without a court trial. These questions should be answered on paper by the students:

1. By what details does Dickens indicate that the Court and the nobility live in extravagant luxury?
2. What conditions does Dickens satirize in Chapter VII?
3. What attitude does the Marquis have toward the death of a peasant's child?
4. Describe living conditions in the village. What are the causes for their poverty?
5. What differing meanings of "honor" are held by the Marquis and by Darnay?
6. How has Dickens foreshadowed the death of the Marquis?
7. Who killed the Marquis?
8. What metaphor is used by Dickens to describe the villagers in Chapter VII?
9. What simile is used often by the mender of the roads to describe the man whom he saw hanging beneath the carriage of the Marquis?

10. What similes are used by Dickens to describe the Marquis?

What minute details are given of his chateau in Chapter IX?

After these questions have been discussed, the students should write a character sketch of the Marquis. Use the remainder of the class period for this activity.

Chapters X, XI, and XII take place in London. The material is easily understood. To check on the reading comprehension of the students, use the questions given below:

1. What promises does Dr. Manette ask of Charles Darnay?
2. What is Darnay's occupation in England?
3. What is your opinion of Mr. Stryver?
4. What is the humor in the scene in which Stryver calls on Mr.

Lorry at the bank?

Note that the title of Chapter XIII is ironical. The important item here is Carton's pledge to Lucie Manette. In Chapter XIV Dickens explains the work of "the honest tradesman." Explain to the class that a "Resurrection Man" took corpses from the graves and sold them to medical students and scientists. In the eighteenth century it was illegal for medical students to dissect corpses for educational purposes. The setting shifts back to Defarge's wine shop in Chapter XV. Sample questions are as follows:

1. What characteristics of the London mob are shown during the funeral procession for Roger Cly?
2. A farce is a ridiculous or absurd event. What incidents make Chapter XIV farcical?
3. What is the mood of the peasants in the wine shop?
4. The appearance in Paris of the mender of the roads serves several purposes. How does Dickens use the incident to (a) fill in the details of the story and (b) emphasize the developing revolutionary spirit?
5. What vow do Defarge and his lieutenants make concerning the French aristocracy?
6. What is the purpose of Madame Defarge's knitting? How is this purpose made clear?

An appropriate display of pictures from scenes of A Tale of Two Cities can now be placed on the bulletin board. An excellent selection of pictures is included in the Prentice-Hall paperback edition of A Tale of Two Cities.¹ Put up only the pictures that portray the plot through Chapter XV. Time in class should be set aside to listen to the phonograph record of A Tale of Two Cities.² Students then should review

¹C. Dickens, A Tale of Two Cities (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Incorporated, 1962).

²A Tale of Two Cities, Listening Library, Incorporated, Greenwich, Connecticut.

briefly the basic conflicts of the plot thus far, the role of each main character, and various aspects of Dickens' style in the novel.

Assign Chapters XVI, XVII, and XVIII for the next class period. Inform the students that a foil is a character who serves to set off another character distinctly by contrast. Madame Defarge is a foil in Chapter XVI. The setting for Chapter XVII is London. The marriage plans of Lucie are the predominant topics here. "Nine Days," the title of Chapter XVIII, is a clue for the chapter's content. Discuss the following questions:

1. Do you think that Madame Defarge is an effective foil for Lucie? Why? Describe Madame Defarge.
2. What startling news did John Barsad tell to the Defarges?
3. What were Dr. Manette's thoughts concerning Lucie when he was imprisoned in the Bastille?
4. What effect does the marriage of Lucie to Charles Darnay have on Dr. Manette? Can you guess why?

After a thorough discussion of the questions listed above, the students should be introduced to Chapters XIX, XX, and XXI. Mr. Lorry has an important role in Chapter XIX. Ask the students to judge whether his actions were wise. Carton makes one important request in Chapter XX. Chapter XXI reveals Dickens' technique of vivid descriptions of a great event: the fall of the Bastille. Ask questions such as the following:

1. Describe the careful methods and procedures that Mr. Lorry uses to bring about the cure of Dr. Manette. What is the key information that Mr. Lorry is seeking?
2. The interplay of character upon character is seen in Chapter XX. How does Lucie change her husband's opinion of Sydney Carton?
3. The description of the storming of the Bastille is a high point in the novel. Does the attack on the Bastille parallel or contrast with the atmosphere at the beginning of the chapter? Pick out the various figures of speech, poetic tools, and the appeals to the senses. List some of the vivid nouns and adjectives.
4. How does Dickens emphasize the poverty and savagery of the mob?

After a discussion of the above questions, the students should be given the remainder of the period to write on these questions:

1. What evidence can you find in the Bastille scene that supports the fact that Defarge and his wife are regarded as the leaders?
2. What leadership qualities are evident?

Students should be allowed to use their books for this assignment.

Assign Chapters XXII, XXIII, and XXIV. A great scene in Chapter XXII is the execution of Foulon. Dickens describes the poverty and ruin of France in Chapter XXIII. Ask students to note carefully the reasons for these conditions. The revenge of the peasants is also important in Chapter XXIII. The letter of Gabelle and Darnay's consequent decision are important for students to note carefully. Ask them to consider why it would be dangerous for Darnay to return to France. After reading these chapters, the students should be led in a discussion of the following questions:

1. Who is the Vengeance? What is her role in the story?
2. Why do the peasants hate Foulon so passionately?
3. "...there were officers to guard the soldiers, but not one of them knew what his men would do..." What does this sentence reveal concerning conditions in France?
4. What is the occupation of Monsieur Gabelle?
5. Write a brief summary or give an oral summary of the letter written by Gabelle.
6. Why does Darnay feel a sense of responsibility toward Gabelle's welfare?
7. What are some of Dickens' satirical phrases in Chapter XXIV?

After class discussion of the questions, play the next part of the phono-

graph record of A Tale of Two Cities.¹ Students should be given an opportunity to ask questions concerning any portion of Book II after they have listened to the record.

BOOK III

The historical setting for Book III is the autumn of 1792. The peasants are now in positions of authority. Suspicion, confusion, and hatred fill the scenes of Book III. Ask the students to note the conduct and attitudes of the patriots in Chapter I. As they read Chapter II, the students should notice carefully the reasons why Dr. Manette fears no one in Paris. What influence does he have with the patriots? Students can then begin reading Chapters I, II, and III for the next class period. Questions such as these can be asked the following day:

1. Why do you believe Dickens ends Book II and begins Book III at just the point that he does?
2. What kind of trip does Darnay have to Paris?
3. What is the evidence as to whether Defarge will help him?
4. Why are the prisoners at La Force spoken of as "ghosts"?
5. Contrast Tellson's Bank in Paris with Tellson's in London.
6. What satirical addition does Dickens make to the French motto?

¹Listening Library, Incorporated, op. cit.

7. Why can Dr. Manette hope to help Charles Darnay?
8. Have seventeen years changed Madame Defarge? Is she a kinetic or a static character?
9. How is suspense created in Chapter III?
10. What is the apparent purpose of the Defarges' visit to Lucie?

Assign Chapters IV, V, and VI. Students should notice the important role of Dr. Manette in these chapters. Point out the over-all conditions in France. Note carefully the dance of the Carmagnole. The trial of Darnay in Chapter VI is of utmost importance. Instruct the students to read Chapter VI carefully. Mimeograph the questions listed below. These should be handed in to the instructor at the next meeting of the class.

1. What is Dickens' satirical comment in Chapter IV?
2. How does Dickens make evident the bloodthirsty spirit and the irresponsibility of the Paris mob?
3. How do you explain the extraordinary strength which Dr. Manette seems to have?
4. Do you consider the wood-sawyer (formerly the mender of the roads) typical of the Revolutionaries? Explain.
5. Identify the Conciergerie.
6. Dr. Manette says that the dancing crowd is no threat to Lucie, but what threatening situation occurs in the scene?

7. Who is the person mentioned in the last paragraph of Chapter V with Mr. Lorry? Can you guess?
8. List the evidence given by Darnay and his witnesses to prove that he is no enemy of the people.
9. List some of the inhumanities of the trial.
10. What typical mob action does the crowd show at the trial and after it?

After the mimeographed sheets have been given to the instructor, Chapters VII, VIII, and IX can be assigned.

Before the students begin their new assignment, the instructor should make a few introductory comments. It should be pointed out that Darnay was required to pay for his food and the wages of his guards. Barsad and Carton are active once again in Chapter VIII. Barsad is in continual danger. Ask the students to review the account of Cly's funeral and Jerry Cruncher's activities as a "Resurrection Man." Notice carefully Sydney Carton's activities. The following questions could serve as a review of these three chapters:

1. How do the men who have come to arrest Darnay for the second time react to Dr. Manette's protest?
2. How does Dickens account for the fact that Miss Pross buys wine at a shop which she had never before entered?
Whom do we unexpectedly meet in this shop?

3. Give evidence that Cly is now in France.
4. What privilege did Barsad have at the Conciergerie?
5. What was it that Carton gained from John Barsad?
6. What did Carton obtain from the chemist?
7. What are the threatening circumstances as Darnay's second trial begins?

For a speech activity, ask several students to read orally the verbal context between Carton and Barsad in Chapter VIII.

The term "flashback" should be explained before students begin reading the next assignment. The letter of Dr. Manette is a good example of the flashback technique in a novel. Explain to the students that the events described in this letter have taken place in 1757. Read selections of the letter to the class. What effect does the reading of the letter have upon the trial proceedings? The students should then write a paragraph that answers this question: In what ways does Dr. Manette's account, written in the Bastille, point out (a) the dreadful helplessness of the poor and (b) the inhuman pride of the aristocrats?

Request the students to read Chapters XI and XII. Instruct the students to find the reason for Madame Defarge's intense hatred toward the aristocracy. Carton's instructions to Mr. Lorry are very important. After the students have read this assignment, discuss the following questions:

1. Who takes command of affairs in Chapter XI? Does this fact surprise you? What comment at the end of this chapter subtly makes for suspense in spite of the finality of affairs?
2. In Chapter XII we discover why Madame Defarge has been so vengeful. Does the reason seem logical?
3. What does Sydney Carton learn about Madame Defarge's plans?
4. What is Carton's purpose in going to the Defarges' wine shop?
5. For what purpose is the symbol of shoemaking used again?
6. What instructions are given to Mr. Lorry by Sydney Carton?

Ask the students to read the final three chapters of Book III.

These three chapters have a very close chronological sequence. What is the climax of the novel? The content of Chapter XIII is expertly written by Dickens. Instruct the students to pick out the paragraph that reveals Dickens' philosophy of the French Revolution. Use the next class period to discuss questions such as these:

1. What character is introduced here as a foil to Carton? Is this character necessary in showing the transformed Sydney Carton? Why or why not?
2. Dickens portrays the thoughts of Darnay, condemned to die. Do you feel that his thoughts are logical and psychologically true? Would the thoughts be different for another person?

3. What letters did Darnay write before the day of execution?
4. How does Carton prevent Darnay from realizing the purpose of his visit to the cell?
5. What details make it believable that Darnay could be taken out of the prison unsuspected?
6. What purpose is served by bringing the little seamstress into the story?
7. Why does Madame Defarge wish to visit Lucie?
8. What happens to Madame Defarge?
9. How does Dickens emphasize the horror of the scene around the guillotine?
10. What writing techniques are used to have the reader experience the last ride in the tumbril?
11. Why should Carton's face have been the most peaceful ever seen among the victims of the guillotine?
12. What emotional effect does the final quotation have on the reader?

Following the discussion of these questions, the instructor should play the selection of Book III on the phonograph.¹

In order to summarize the entire novel, a class period should

¹Listening Library, Incorporated, op. cit.

be set aside prior to the evaluation test to discuss the questions listed below. Be sure to emphasize that the answers to these questions may be a combination of several possibilities.

1. What do you believe was the purpose of this novel: a source of entertainment, an escape from everyday life, historical information, a criticism of evil and injustice?
2. What was dominant: story, characters, setting, theme?
3. What type of fiction is A Tale of Two Cities: romance, realism, naturalism?
4. In what person is the story told, first or third?
5. What is the main climax of the novel?
6. Which characters are static and which are kinetic?
7. Which characters are heroic; which are realistic?
8. Are the settings essential to the novel?
9. How are the settings revealed: by description, dialogue, or historical background and analysis? Give examples.
10. What is the main theme of A Tale of Two Cities?
11. In a good novel a subject is introduced, explored, and concluded, leaving the reader satisfied with his experience. Did you experience this feeling of satisfaction? Why or why not?
12. What scenes in the novel stand out for you? Why?

After the summary questions have been discussed in class, allow time for other questions from the students concerning the entire novel.

A filmstrip of A Tale of Two Cities is available,¹ or the instructor may wish to show the excellent motion picture of A Tale of Two Cities.² Both are excellent aids for a thorough review of the novel. If the motion picture or the filmstrip is not shown to the class, the study can be closed by an evaluation test administered to the students by the instructor.

¹"A Tale of Two Cities," Educational Audio Visual, Incorporated, Pleasantville, New York.

²"A Tale of Two Cities," Films Incorporated, Wilmette, Illinois.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY

By reviewing the criticisms of Dickens' work, by studying the novel, A Tale of Two Cities, by exploring methods of presenting the novel, and by surveying the possible usage of audio-visual materials, the writer has developed this method of teaching A Tale of Two Cities to a group of competent juniors in the senior high school.

The many difficulties found in A Tale of Two Cities are a source of constant challenge to the teacher of the language arts. The writer has attempted in the critical analysis in Chapter II to present information concerning Dickens' beliefs, background materials for A Tale of Two Cities, the influence of Carlyle, character portrayal, historical and geographical setting, various types of literary techniques, social and moral criticisms of society, and the twofold theme found in this novel.

In the teaching plan of Chapter III the writer presented ideas for preliminary activities, learning situations, and culminating activities. The questions concerning the content and technique of A Tale of Two Cities were directed primarily toward the above-average student of the language arts. Opportunities for supplementary reading, dramatic activities, composition work, and artistic activities were provided by the writer. An evaluation sheet for testing purposes was also prepared by the writer.

Teachers of the language arts plan that the final outcome of the reading shall be an appreciation of the novel as a whole, the understanding of Dickens' twofold theme, and a creative sharing of the experiences of the characters. Because Americans are living in a disturbed period of world history, A Tale of Two Cities offers opportunities for interpretation and application to the significant problems of the twentieth century. Revolution and its impact on individuals, how crisis develops or destroys character, how the innocent suffer, how justice may be corrupted--these are the commonplace news stories of this period in history. Such is also the content of Dickens' A Tale of Two Cities. So it is that the reading of this novel becomes a vital contribution to the understanding of American young people in the twentieth century.

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B. PERIODICALS

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

OBJECTIVE TEST WITH KEY

Multiple choice questions

Directions: There are several answers given after each question. Only one answer is correct. Select the correct answer and write the number of the correct ending in the space provided at the left side of the sheet.

- () 1. The gentleman from Tellson's was (1) Defarge, (2) Mr. Stryver, (3) Mr. Lorry, (4) Cly.
- () 2. Ladybird was a name given to (1) Miss Pross, (2) the Vengeance, (3) Madame Defarge, (4) Miss Manette.
- () 3. The story opens in (1) Paris (2) the wine shop (3) on the Dover road (4) 105 North Tower.
- () 4. Miss Manette had thought that her father was (1) in America (2) in the British navy (3) dead (4) in an asylum.
- () 5. Dr. Manette had been put in prison because he (1) made plots with Defarge (2) refused to pay his debts (3) was not a naturalized citizen (4) knew too much of the cruelty of the aristocrats.
- () 6. The carriage of the Marquis killed the child of (1) Dr. Manette (2) Gaspard (3) Lucie (4) Mr. Lorry.
- () 7. The Marquis was murdered by (1) Defarge (2) the mender of roads (3) Barsad (4) Gaspard.
- () 8. The opening of the Revolution was marked by (1) the hanging of Gaspard (2) the storming of the Bastille (3) the arrest of Gabelle (4) the burning of the chateau.
- () 9. Sydney Carton told Lucie Manette that he would (1) loan her father money (2) write her letters for her (3) go to Ireland (4) give his life to keep one she loved.
- () 10. Darnay's second arrest in Paris was caused by (1) Defarges (2) Mr. Lorry (3) Barsad (4) the Vengeance.

- () 11. At the beginning of the Revolution Mr. Lorry went to France to
 (1) lead the revolutionists (2) take care of Tellson's banking
 business (3) hunt for the Marquis St. Evremonde (4) visit
 Madame Defarge.
- () 12. Jacques was a name given to (1) the King's guards (2) road
 menders (3) a secret society that plotted the Revolution
 (4) grave robbers.

MATCHING QUESTIONS

Directions: On the left side of the page are fifteen terms to be defined. The definitions are on the right side of the page. Select and write the number of the correct definition in the space provided at the left.

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| () 1. guillotine | 1. a castle |
| () 2. tumbrils | 2. ended |
| () 3. chateau | 3. a beheading machine |
| () 4. Tribunal | 4. a room at the top of the house |
| () 5. garret | 5. a rude wooden cart |
| () 6. St. Antoine | 6. a prison in Paris |
| () 7. Old Bailey | 7. warlike |
| () 8. passports | 8. a palace in Paris |
| () 9. Conciergerie | 9. a French revenue officer |
| () 10. Tuilleries | 10. a town of France |
| () 11. Farmer-General | 11. traveling papers |
| () 12. martial | 12. the noble class |
| () 13. terminated | 13. a court of justice |
| () 14. aristocrats | 14. a district of Paris |
| () 15. Beauvais | 15. a criminal court of London |

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

Directions: Use "Yes" or "No" or one word answers below.

- _____ 1. Was the knitting done by Madame Defarge important to the French Revolution?
- _____ 2. Who was the King of France during this era?
- _____ 3. What name was given to the nobles who became voluntary exiles?
- _____ 4. Was the murder of the Marquis totally unexpected?
- _____ 5. During what year was the Bastille captured?
- _____ 6. Was Charles Darnay typical of most of the French aristocracy?
- _____ 7. Was Defarge more of a leader than his wife?
- _____ 8. What was the password of the secret club which Defarge headed?
- _____ 9. How many years does the main story cover?
- _____ 10. Does the author create a feeling of sympathy for Barsad and Cly?
- _____ 11. Who was Barsad's sister?
- _____ 12. What was the motto of the French Revolutionary Period?
- _____ 13. Does the author use specific details?
- _____ 14. Who was the King of England during this period?
- _____ 15. Do the Crunchers always have fish for breakfast after Jerry's fishing trips?

TRUE-FALSE QUESTIONS

Directions: Mark "T" in the space if the statement is true; mark "F" if it is false.

- () 1. The Defarges are members of the French nobility.
- () 2. The novel opens in the year 1776.
- () 3. The mender of the roads killed Mr. Defarge.
- () 4. Sydney Carton loved Lucie Manette.
- () 5. A metaphor is a comparison showing likeness between two things.
- () 6. An hyperbole is an obvious exaggeration.
- () 7. A simile is a suggested likeness between two things without like, as, or than expressed.
- () 8. La Force was a luxurious hotel in Paris.
- () 9. Dr. Manette wrote his letter in 1769.
- () 10. Lucie's child did not like Sydney Carton.

ESSAY QUESTIONS

1. Write a detailed characterization of Ernest Defarge.
2. Why did Carton decide to offer his life for Darnay's? What were these considerations? What were the compensations for this sacrifice that caused him to feel a greater sense of rest than he had ever known?
3. What are some of the major crises and climaxes of the novel?
4. What is Dickens' philosophy of the French Revolution?
5. Which characters are static and which ones are kinetic?
6. Discuss the main theme of A Tale of Two Cities.

OBJECTIVE TEST KEY

Multiple Choice

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. 3 | 7. 4 |
| 2. 4 | 8. 2 |
| 3. 3 | 9. 4 |
| 4. 3 | 10. 1 |
| 5. 4 | 11. 2 |
| 6. 4 | 12. 3 |

Matching

- | | |
|-------|--------|
| 1. 3 | 9. 6 |
| 2. 5 | 10. 8 |
| 3. 1 | 11. 9 |
| 4. 13 | 12. 7 |
| 5. 4 | 13. 2 |
| 6. 14 | 14. 12 |
| 7. 15 | 15. 10 |
| 8. 11 | |

True-False

1. F
2. F
3. F
4. T
5. F
6. T
7. F
8. F
9. F
10. F

Short Answer

1. Yes
2. Louis XVI
3. emigres
4. No
5. 1789
6. No
7. No
8. Jacques
9. eighteen
10. No
11. Miss Pross
12. Liberty, Equality, Fraternity
13. Yes
14. George III
15. No

APPENDIX B

VOCABULARY LIST

BOOK I

- | | |
|----------------|----------------|
| 1. epoch | 6. cadaverous |
| 2. incredulity | 7. spectre |
| 3. discreet | 8. feigned |
| 4. pilferer | 9. obliterated |
| 5. apprehend | 10. gaoler |

BOOK II

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| 1. postilion | 25. manifest |
| 2. trepidation | 26. ostentatious |
| 3. convivial | 27. complacent |
| 4. proviso | 28. dubiously |
| 5. indictment | 29. caricaturing |
| 6. circuitously | 30. ruminated |
| 7. immolate | 31. feint |
| 8. engendered | 32. ostensible |
| 9. pernicious | 33. in lieu of |
| 10. propensities | 34. shrouds |
| 11. apostrophize | 35. ubiquitous |
| 12. lacquey | 36. aquiline |
| 13. abject | 37. unimpeachable |
| 14. affably | 38. proscribed |
| 15. patrician | 39. allusion |
| 16. valet | 40. magnanimous |
| 17. cowed | 41. explicit |
| 18. felicitously | 42. gory |
| 19. obsequiousness | 43. ingenuity |
| 20. chateau | 44. squalid |
| 21. flambeau | 45. sacristan |
| 22. importunity | 46. tocsin |
| 23. constraint | 47. inviolate |
| 24. differentially | 48. dolorous |
| | 49. renunciation |

BOOK III

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------|
| 1. injunction | 14. taciturn |
| 2. carnage | 15. contentious |
| 3. inclement | 16. imperious |
| 4. implicitly | 17. lethargy |
| 5. capriciously | 18. presentiment |
| 6. purveyors | 19. augment |
| 7. felicity | 20. acquiesced |
| 8. reticule | 21. antipathy |
| 9. estranged | 22. assignation |
| 10. culpability | 23. erst |
| 11. abhorrence | 24. inveterate |
| 12. subornation | 25. expiation |
| 13. inference | 26. abstraction |

APPENDIX C

ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES

I. Artistic Activities

- A. Make a scrap book containing original scenes from the text, a vocabulary unit, original character sketches, an outline of the French Revolution, and examples of various figures of speech.
- B. Prepare a pageant of dolls in period costume.
- C. Prepare a series of cartoons.
- D. Prepare cardboard silhouettes of leading characters in A Tale of Two Cities.
- E. Construct three-dimensional scenes from the book such as the garret, a miniature bastille, guillotine, or tumbril.

II. Dramatic Activities

- A. A student could prepare a dramatic passage from the novel for interpretive reading.
- B. Students could present the scene of Darnay's first trial in London by converting the indirect quotations into direct speech.
- C. Several girls could act out the scene between Miss Pross and Madame Defarge in the empty apartment. The parts can be easily memorized. Most of the performance will be pantomime.

III. Written Activities

- A. Write a character sketch on one of the following: Mr. Stryver, Jerry Cruncher, Madame Defarge, or Lucie Manette.
- B. Write a theme on the topic: Is love really stronger than hate? Relate this question to the novel's content.
- C. Write limericks to satirize Jerry Cruncher.

- D. Write an original verse featuring a character or incident in A Tale of Two Cities.
- E. Write a ballad on Sydney Carton.
- F. Describe the historical setting of A Tale of Two Cities.
- G. Prepare a research project on one of the following topics:
"The Reforms Proposed by the Victorian Writers" or "Dickens: Sentimentalist, Humorist, Humanitarian."
- H. Prepare selections of the various types of imagery found in A Tale of Two Cities.
- I. A Tale of Two Cities deals with man in conflict with his environment, with conflict between love and hate, between duty and desire, and between honor and dishonor. Write several paragraphs describing one of these conflicts as it is revealed in the novel.
- J. Choose three of the characters in the novel and write several paragraphs discussing the choices they make and the reasons for those choices.
- K. Write a theme on the topic: In what ways was life in the eighteenth century, as depicted in A Tale of Two Cities, similar to that of the twentieth century? Students should deal in terms of ideas and human emotions.
- L. Write a report on one of the following topics: Crimes and punishments in eighteenth-century England, grave-robbing for scientific experiment, the lettre de cachet in France.

APPENDIX D

AUDIO-VISUAL MATERIALS

I. Phonograph Records

- A. "A Tale of Two Cities" A British production directed by Howard Rose. It is suitable for high school and college use. It is one 12" record. 33 1/3 rpm. Order from the National Council of Teachers of English, 508 South Sixth Street, Champaign, Illinois. Cost: \$5.95.
- B. "A Tale of Two Cities" Two 12" records. 16 rpm. Order from Listening Library Incorporated, 18 West Putnam Avenue, Greenwich, Connecticut. Cost: \$10.95.

II. Filmstrips--Slides

- A. "Charles Dickens--Novelist Who Effected Many Reforms" It is photographed in color. It gives a good background of Dickens. Order from Educational Audio Visual, Incorporated, Pleasantville, New York. Cost: \$4.00.
- B. "A Tale of Two Cities" It is photographed in color. Order from Educational Audio Visual, Incorporated, Pleasantville, New York. Cost: \$4.00.
- C. "The French Revolution" This is a series of two filmstrips. Part I includes the era of 1789-1792. Part II describes the years of 1792-1794. Produced in black and white. These filmstrips portray the main events of the revolution: the arrest of the King in 1792, the surrender of Verdun, the trial and execution of Louis and Marie Antoinette, and the rise of Robespierre. Cost: \$7.20. Order from Educational Audio Visual, Incorporated, Pleasantville, New York.
- D. "How to Read a Historical Novel" Order from McGraw-Hill Book Company, Hightstown, New Jersey. Cost: \$6.50. Produced in color.

- E. "The Historical Background for A Tale of Two Cities" Produced in color. Order from McGraw-Hill Book Company, Hightstown, New Jersey. Cost: \$4.50.
- F. "The French Revolution" This is a set of thirty-five colored slides. They are very good in portraying the storming of the Bastille, a trial scene of the Reign of Terror, and a meeting of the revolutionary committee. Order from Educational Audio Visual, Incorporated, Pleasantville, New York. Cost: \$10.00.

III. Motion Pictures

- A. "A Tale of Two Cities" Scenes and characters are portrayed with flawless care. Order either the classroom version of forty minutes or the full-length presentation of 121 minutes. Ronald Colman plays the role of Sydney Carton. These films can be leased or rented. Order from Films Incorporated, Wilmette, Illinois.
- B. "Charles Dickens: Background for His Works" This is a pictorial review of the England of Dickens and his novels. It includes the backgrounds for Great Expectations, Bleak House, and A Tale of Two Cities. The film is eleven minutes in length. Order from Coronet Films, Chicago 1, Illinois.
- C. "Charles Dickens: Characters in Action" This film presents sequences from feature films based upon four of Dickens' works: A Christmas Carol, A Tale of Two Cities, Great Expectations, and David Copperfield. The film is twenty-one minutes in length. Order from Teaching Film Custodians, 25 W. 43rd Street, New York 36, New York.
- D. "Literature Appreciation: How to Read Novels" This film is an introduction to the study of the novel. Sequences from the novels of Dickens, Twain, Cooper, Hawthorne, and Galsworthy are used as examples. The film is ten minutes in length. Order from Coronet Films, 65 East South Water Street, Chicago 1, Illinois.

APPENDIX E

SUPPLEMENTARY READING

I. Biographies of Dickens

Becker, M. L. An Introduction to Charles Dickens.

Chesterton, G. K. Charles Dickens, the Last of the Great Men.

Johnson, E. Charles Dickens: His Tragedy and Triumph.

Pearson, H. Dickens, His Character, Comedy, and Career.

II. Novels Concerning the French Revolution

Orczy, E. The Scarlet Pimpernel.

Sabatini, R. Scaramouche.

III. Reference Works for the Instructor

Cecil, D. Early Victorian Novelists: Essays in Revaluation.

Cross, W. L. The Development of the English Novel.

Quiller-Couch, A. C. Charles Dickens and Other Victorians.

Wagenknecht, E. An Introduction to Dickens.

IV. Works of Dickens for Senior High Reading Lists

Great Expectations

David Copperfield

Hard Times

Bleak House

Pickwick Papers

Nickolas Nickleby